

# North Chicago VA News



North Chicago  
VA Medical Center  
3001 Green Bay Road  
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

January 2006

## HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES



The all employee holiday party was held December 8, in Building 134, Room C121.

Employees were treated to several kinds of delicious snacks, including meatballs, wraps, cheese and crackers, cookies

Canteen provided the scrumptious food and over 30 drawing prizes from funds made possible through purchases made in the Canteen.

Our employees that work third shift, and the staff at the Community Based Outpatient Clinics, who were unable to attend the event from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., were provided special holiday treats as well.

Thanks to everyone for making this holiday event successful, and to the Canteen for the great food and service! Wishing you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous new year!



and sodas, while enjoying holiday music! All employees were entered into the drawing, whether or not they were able to attend the event. Stephanie James, Social Worker for Mental Health, was our grand prize drawing winner of a 32" color television!

Phyllis Gaines, Mary Craigen, and Ron Robinson were in line for goodies during the Employee Holiday party. Santa (Dennis Lamb) treated Charlene Ivanovic to a bit of holiday cheer and Santa's hopes for the Bears. Right, Loretta Reyes, Jadwiga Olejniczak and Judy Vega offer a toast for a new year.



## North Chicago News

North Chicago News is published for staff and volunteers of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Submissions can be sent to [douglas.shouse@med.va.gov](mailto:douglas.shouse@med.va.gov)  
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## HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

The holiday activities this December included caroling, tree decorating, catered parties and dinners here at the VA by the AMVETS, VFW, and the DAV, and several holiday dinners for our veterans in the community including a Christmas pageant and pizza at Giordanos by the VFW and at the Fox Lake and Wauconda American Legion Posts. There were numerous gift distributions to all of the wards by the Salvation Army, the Vernon Hills Police Department, the VFW, Motorola, Tap Pharmaceutical, the Masons, and the United Protestant Church Youth Group of Grayslake. The annual VAVS Patient

Holiday Parties featured entertainment by the children from the SDA Christian School of Lake County, the Lake Bluff Middle School, and the veterans from the Building 46 choir.

The American Legion Auxiliary sponsored the annual Gift Shop where the veterans are allowed to choose presents to send to their family members. The American Legion sponsored it's annual "Gifts for Yanks". United Airlines and the Waukegan JROTC not only decorated the trees on each ward, but they also planned a party with a large band and a catered dinner.



## Holiday Message From Leadership

We want to thank you for another great year! This past year has been filled with interesting and exciting times, including the construction work for the OR/ER Project, the formal signing ceremony between VA & DoD on the full integration of North Chicago VAMC and Naval Hospital Great Lakes, the observance and celebration of the 75TH Anniversary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, a successful Office of Inspector General Combined Assessment Program visit and renovations in the environment of care in Bldg. 131, just to name a few.

Your commitment to serving our patients demonstrates your

relentless dedication to providing the highest quality care possible. In June 2006, the OR/ER project will be complete which will bring a new look to our facility as well as having active duty military and their family members here daily for care.

We offer our sincerest gratitude for your efforts this past year. We hope the holiday season was both a joyous and safe time for you, and that the New Year will provide many opportunities for cooperation and compassion and a bright new year for you, your family and our medical center.

Thanks again and we look forward to working with you in 2006.

Sincerely,

Patrick L. Sullivan  
Medical Center Director

Tariq Hassan, M.D.  
Chief of Staff

Mary T. Roseborough, MSN  
Associate Director, Patient/Nursing Services

Marianne Semrad  
Associate Director, Facility Support

## World AIDS Day Observation



Pictured from left to right: Guest speakers Teri Dreher, RN, and Debbie Gilliam, RN with Dr. Walid Khayr, Chief of Infectious Disease, and Deborah Russell, RN, HIV Coordinator.

December 1 was World AIDS Day around the nation. NCVAMC recognized World AIDS Day by inviting guest speakers to share their

health care for adults and children with HIV/AIDS during this medical mission to South Africa. They shared many experiences and

experience from a medical mission to Pretoria, South Africa. Ms Debbie Gilliam and Ms. Teri Dreher are nurses in the Lake County, IL community that assisted in providing

discussed the social, economical, and cultural aspects that affect the HIV/AIDS pandemic in this region. This provided a global view of HIV/AIDS to our veterans, staff, and community members.

In appreciation to veterans who face the challenges of living with HIV/AIDS and honoring those that have passed on from AIDS, a panel of the AIDS Memorial quilt was displayed. We also recognize and support all NCVAMC staff and community agencies that provide care to those veterans with HIV/AIDS. At NCVAMC, we strive for excellence in providing comprehensive, compassionate health care, and are proud to care for our nation's veterans living with HIV/AIDS.

## Women Veterans Fall Program

November 16th was a windy and dreary day, but that didn't prevent more than 60 women veterans from coming to the North Chicago VA. In what has become a much anticipated tradition, the North Chicago Women Veterans Committee sponsored its annual program and luncheon in recognition of the many contributions of women veterans.

Following welcoming remarks by Associate Director, Marianne Semrad, the Women Veterans Program Manager, Katherine Dong

provided an update to attendees on the status of the Joint VA and Navy Comprehensive Women's Clinic. Next, it was time for the main event. Attendees were provided with an overview of women's health issues by the North Chicago gynecologist, Dr. Theresa Kepic, as well as by a North Chicago neurologist/geriatrician, Dr. Rita Shapiro. Both physicians allowed time to address specific issues brought up by the women. Hand-outs provided tips for improving and maintaining health.

During and after the luncheon, opportunities for networking and rekindling of friendships abounded. Periods of service represented ranged from World War II to Operation Desert Storm. The North Chicago VA, in conjunction with our partners at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital, is planning a series of ongoing educational programs for women veterans and Department of Defense beneficiaries. Judging by the success of this program, women are eager to become leaders in adopting more healthy lifestyles.

## 4th Annual Diversity Day



Wednesday, November 30. The theme of the program was, "Holidays Around the World". The event serves several purposes: to increase awareness and to educate the staff on the ethnic cultures and the diversity within our medical center workforce, as well as provide an opportunity to share memorable moments and fun with co-workers. Groups and countries represented in this year's event included the Philippines,



Native American Indians, Korea, India, Poland, Mexico, the Caribbean, South America, African-Americans, Scotland. The event began with a parade of flags representing countries from around the world. Greetings of Merry Christmas and Happy New Year were extended to the audience in each of the native languages from representatives of the participating groups. A variety of ethnic entertainment was provided throughout the program. Attendees were treated to a variety of "taste samples" of ethnic food from around the world.



The Fourth Annual Diversity Day Celebration was held at the North Chicago VA Medical Center on

fun with co-workers. Groups and countries represented in this year's event included the Philippines,

## In The News...



**Above left:** Every year, an employee is selected for the prestigious Hands and Heart Award presented by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. This award is given to an employee who consistently demonstrates exceptional, sustained, compassionate, direct patient care to America's veterans. The North Chicago VA Medical Center is honored to announce that Mrs. Katherine E. Dong, Leader of Ancillary Services, was recently presented with the 2005 Secretary's Hands and Heart Award.

**Above right:** On Dec. 2, 2005, Joe Jimenez and Kathleen Ladewig were presented with plaques by staff from Counterpart International. They were recognized for their continued support of donated medical supplies that facilitate humanitarian aid to other countries.

**Right:** Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn and State Representative Kathy Ryg held a Public Forum at the medical center on Nov. 10 to provide the Lake County veterans with an update of state services and legislation that effects veterans.





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# Operation Military Pride

During the month of November, the North Chicago VA Medical Center staff and volunteers were invited to contribute items and/or money for care packages to send to U.S. troops serving overseas this holiday season. This is the second year the NCVAMC held this drive and it proved, once again, to be a great success due to the generosity of the staff and volunteers who know what it means to be Proud to Care!



Lyle Walter, Colleen Smoger and Deborah Russell help pack up the goodies.

The vast amount of items collected was enough to pack 36 boxes full of

snacks, books, games, stuffed animals, toys and other wonderful

goodies. In addition were hand written letters and cards prepared by students in the 4th grade class at Dr. Bessie Rhodes Magnet School, located in Skokie, IL and two 5th grade classes at Curtis Strange School, located in Kenosha, WI.

Among the thirty-six recipients were 4 immediate family members of NCVAMC staff. A special package was made up for a military K-9 and his handler which included items for both the dog and the soldier.

Troops' names and addresses were received from [www.operationmilitarypride.org](http://www.operationmilitarypride.org).

# Celebrating With The Troops In Mind



From left to right: Dr. Rodolfo Uy, John Ponder, Debi Bourdo, Roxi Tubbs, Jeffrey Van Schoyck, Rachael Turchin, Linda Kaye Smith, Dr. Gregg Moga (Back), Greg Grace, and Dr. Diana Pure.

The Special Medical Exams Section (SME) of Medicine is celebrating Christmas with our military troops in mind. The patient waiting area proudly displays pictures of our deployed troops, with greetings for the holiday season. There is even a military train which circles the Christmas tree. A “thank-you” gathering for the team at Branch Medical Clinic, Great Lakes, was held to show appreciation for their teamwork in managing active duty patients.

SME staff have sent Christmas and Holiday wishes to deployed troops who are being supported through American Snipers.org, a non-profit organization which provides state-of-the-art equipment and tools to special teams in Iraq, including Navy Seals, Marines, Army and reservists. Several deployed units provided pictures and holiday greetings which are prominently displayed for all to see.

SME Section provides patient care to veterans as well as active duty service members from all military branches, with special emphasis on those from Naval Training Station, Great Lakes. It is the only outpatient clinical Section in VISN 12 (and most other VISNs) providing DoD separation and retirement physicals in a VA setting. The clinic team works with Branch Medical Clinic, Great Lakes to coordinate patient visits, and serves as a point-of-contact for transitioning service members. The unit also performs workups for OIF veterans who have recently separated from the military and would like to enroll at North Chicago VAMC for care.

# Director's Canteen Fund

Jill McKenzie, Chief of the Canteen presents Mr. Sullivan with a check for \$13,524. This money is for the Canteen Fund that is utilized throughout the year for employee functions.

